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Moral Worth and Inclinations in Kantian Ethics

Christian Onof

Birkbeck College and Imperial College, London

This paper addresses the issue of making sense of Kant's notion of moral worth. Kant's identification in GMM¹ I of the good will as the unconditional good leads to understanding the moral worth of human agency in ways which, some critics claim, is at odds with our moral intuitions. By first focusing upon how Kant singles out action out of duty as characteristic of the good will, we shall show that a covert assumption about our nature potentially weakens the force of Kant's argument. This paper claims that this assumption is not needed, and proposes an interpretation of Kant's notion of moral worth that dispenses with it. In so doing, the interpretative strategy draws upon Kant's solution to the Third Antinomy, and therefore on Transcendental Idealism.

An analysis of the moral worth of the action of a benevolent agent who heeds the requirements of duty will show how inclinations contribute to morally worthy action, while the action's moral worth lies in its being motivated by duty. A further analysis of the issue of moral worth in the light of recent scholarship introduces a distinction between the moral worth of the action and of the agent. This provides the material to address an important standard criticism of Kantian ethics. The paper concludes by suggesting that the proposed interpretation is required to make proper sense of Kant's indirect duty to develop compassionate inclinations.

¹ In the paper, GMM refers to the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, MM to the Metaphysics of Morals, CPR to the Critique of Pure Reason, CPtR to the Critique of Practical Reason, and CJ to the Critique of Judgement. AA refers to the Akademie Ausgabe edition of Kant's works.

A.

A Practical Conception of the Self

Kant's argument in GMM I

Kant's conception of moral worth is first presented in abstract form with the notion of the good will as the only unconditional good (GMM:392-4). What Kant means by 'unconditional good' is: 'of absolute worth' (GMM:394), but also: 'intrinsically good'. Indeed Lewis (1983) characterises intrinsic properties as properties (i) a thing has in virtue of the way that thing itself, and nothing else, is; and (ii) properties that depend only on that thing. Correspondingly, we find Kant characterising the good will as the only good which is both (i) good in itself (unlike a conditional good, GMM:393-4), and (ii) independently of everything else (unlike happiness, GMM:393;395-6). This notion then gets specified for human beings, i.e. beings endowed with reason, but also with a sensuous nature, in the form of duty (GMM:397). In the developments leading to the introduction of duty, Kant sets out the chief features of morally worthy action.

If the intrinsicity of the goodness of the good will is its defining characteristic, the actions it produces must bear the same characteristics in terms of their moral worth. From (i), this moral worth must display an independence from anything else, i.e. from how any empirical state of affairs might happen to be. From (ii), their being good must not be the result of any accidental relations.

Let us examine condition (i). When viewed in time, an action is triggered under certain initial conditions, and its implementation results in new states of affairs (consequences). Considering consequences first, the independence condition entails that the moral worth of the action cannot depend upon the states of affairs brought about by this

action. This means an independence of actualised consequences (GMM:399).²

Focusing now upon triggering conditions, these empirical states of affairs can be of outer or inner sense. Kant does not say anything about outer, i.e. physical (in a broad sense), states of affairs. Clearly, a particular action depends upon what it is physically possible to do in the particular circumstances the agent finds herself. The goodness of an action cannot, however, be dependent upon its “physical make-up”. This is important for GMM II as it shows why the agent’s subjective principle, or maxim, of action, that is to be tested for its moral worth, must be general³ (see Kuehn, 2009), and refer to a type of action that can be instantiated in different “physical” circumstances.

What Kant does refer to, are circumstances of inner sense, i.e. psychological factors: the moral worth of the good will’s actions must not depend upon the presence of psychologically favourable circumstances, or the absence of psychologically unfavourable ones (GMM:397-398). We shall examine this below.

These negative characterisations expound the sense in which the moral worth of the good will’s actions is independent of circumstances. Since, according to condition (ii) above, it must also not be accidental that they are good, they must therefore be done because they are good and only for the reasons that make them good. This is how Kant arrives at the conclusion that the actions of the good will are those the agent does out of duty (GMM: 397).

If this characterises the agency of the good will, to understand how to apportion moral worth to actions, we must examine what is meant by independence of favourable and unfavourable (psychological) circumstances.

² This is a feature which Kant examines once the concept of duty is already in place, together with intended consequences. It is noteworthy that actualised consequences could already be excluded as bestowing moral worth at this stage of the analysis, while intended ones could not.

³ On the whole, ‘principle’ seems more appropriate to reflect this generality than ‘maxim’. This is, of course, not how Kant uses these words, hence I shall keep both in the remainder of the paper (see Onof, 1998).

Inner sense is defined by Kant as that ‘by means of which the mind intuits itself, or its inner state’ (A22/B37), and about which he further states that ‘all representations (...) as determinations of the mind themselves belong to the inner state’ (A34/B50). Such representations must be able to be accompanied by the ‘I think’ else they ‘would be nothing to me’ (B132). So these states of inner sense (which define what I have called psychological circumstances) are cognitive ones. What is at stake here is therefore what the agent believes, and the claim is that the moral worth of an action is independent of such beliefs.

What kind of beliefs could be relevant? They could either be (i) beliefs about empirical states of affairs that define what my duty is in the specific situation; (ii) or beliefs about what I ought to do. As regards the second, the knowledge of what morality commands is, for Kant, accessible to every man (GMM: 404). As a result, the possibility of a dependence of moral worth upon such beliefs is not practically relevant. As for the first type of beliefs, Kant does not address the issue, which suggests he takes it as obvious that moral worth is independent of such beliefs. To support that, one can note that he mentions ‘ignorance’ as a subjective condition (GMM: 42 *fn*) featuring in the maxim. What is at stake is whether the maxim conforms to universal law: this is therefore independent of how much truth there is among the agent’s beliefs about the world.

Inclinations and the practical notion of self

But there is arguably more to psychological circumstances in inner sense. After all, our representations originate in affections of our senses, and these sensations may also be considered insofar as they refer to the subject, rather than the object. This happens when considering the determination of ‘feeling of pleasure or displeasure’ (CJ: 206). That is, with these sensations, inclinations are manifested insofar as their object ‘is [or not] regarded as an

object of our liking' (CJ: 206): 'the agreeable produces an inclination' (CJ: 207). Since Kant's discussion in GMM I is devoted to the moral relevance of the presence or absence of morally favourable inclinations (e.g. GMM: 393), it would therefore seem apposite to include their presence or absence among the psychological circumstances of an action. And indeed, when Kant examines a sympathetic disposition, this is apparently viewed as only circumstantial to the agent's action: such dispositions form no integral part of the agent (GMM: 398).⁴

This interpretation of inclinations as psychological circumstances would however seem to commit Kant to a view of the self which many are likely to dispute. Williams (1973: 207-9) raises a well-known objection, namely that there are certain 'categorical desires' characterising the self, without which one would not be who one is. He thereby builds upon a Hegelian conception of character (Wood: 1990). It would seem that here, there is a metaphysical choice to be made, and that this will lead to one of two different kinds of ethics. That is, it seems that in GMM I, Kant is already implicitly relying upon the metaphysical claim that we are defined exclusively by our rationality. Does this mean that GMM I is dogmatically wedded to such a notion of human beings, which would weaken its broad appeal?

⁴ In this paper, I focus upon morally favourable inclinations. Unfavourable inclinations are then inclinations not to do what is one's duty. Their absence does not require a separate examination from that of the presence of favourable ones. Indeed, consider that a moral agent is always experiencing inclinations. This can be seen from Kant's empirical account of agency (see further in the paper). Consider two agents, agent A who is experiencing an inclination against, e.g. helping another, and agent B who is not experiencing any inclination in favour of helping another. B is in fact experiencing other inclinations. What B's lack of inclination towards helping the other denotes is in effect a balance of his inclinations towards not helping. This is not different in kind from a specific inclination against helping. Ultimately, what counts in the belief-desire model that we are assuming for the empirical account of agency (see further in the paper), is the relative strength of inclinations. A balance of inclinations away from duty can thus be achieved either with a strong inclination against doing the morally right thing, or with a lack of any inclination towards doing it, coupled with inclinations to doing other things.

Admittedly, Kant's task in GMM I is not to give a solid philosophical foundation to the a priori truth of his claims; the task is rather an interpretation of common moral ideas. Nevertheless, the aim of such an interpretation should be to reach out to as many readers as possible.⁵ One therefore has to ask whether Kant requires this understanding of the self.⁶

The question is whether there is any room to accommodate some of the concerns of the Hegel-Williams criticisms? I want to suggest that there is. Namely, it is possible to accept that the desires we act upon can be viewed as contributing to defining who we are in a practical sense.⁷ With this picture of the self, we shall then show how desires can be seen to contribute to morally worthy agency. So, although I shall not question the claim that moral worth lies in acting out of duty, inclinations will *not be viewed as defining psychological circumstances* which are to be disregarded when acting out of duty. Rather, they will be seen to have a role in the *implementation* of the agent's duty.

A notion of self-involving characteristic desires will perhaps strike one at the outset as un-Kantian. This paper will not suggest that such a notion is put forward by Kant.

⁵ Additionally, as we shall see, the covert contentious exclusion of all but mere rationality as definitive of our selves is closely connected with the controversial issue of the lack of moral value of benevolent action.

⁶ This covert claim may, *prima facie*, seem to be related to the contentious claim in GMM III, that we can consider ourselves to be members of the intelligible world, i.e. as transcendently free, *on the basis* of our being endowed with reason. That such an inference is not valid, is generally agreed among commentators (e.g. Allison, 1990:227-9). But the covert claim in GMM I is distinct in that no grounding is at stake here. Rather, transcendental freedom is, in effect, assumed (at least as a practical assumption). But in so doing, any other characteristic features of a practical self are excluded: free rationality is taken to be the sole determinant of our nature as agents.

⁷ There are, no doubt, some desires that are more important to our sense of self than others. This would suggest a distinction between essential and non-essential desires. I think that Williams's view that "categorical desires" can be taken as definitive of a notion of self is problematic because of how the objects of inclinations change over time. This issue is in any case not relevant to the discussion in this paper however (although see footnote 11), so I shall rather view the self as defined by all desires characterising an individual's agency.

But in the absence of any unambiguous statement as to what characterises the selfhood of the agent in Kant's practical philosophy,⁸ this is proposed as an interpretation that is in the spirit of Kant's project, and which will help clarify issues of moral worth.

To respond to the claim that this notion of self is un-Kantian, I want to make two points. First, if the proposed understanding of my selfhood is to be compatible with GMM III, it must allow for a place for our nature as rational beings, and a central one, in the sense that it is "higher" (GMM: 452). This requirement can only be accommodated if (i) the desires characterising my self do not exhaust my selfhood, but that it is also that of a rational being; and if (ii) my rational choices can impact which desires are indeed thus characteristic of my self. That is, although I have characteristic inclinations and cannot be a human self without them, I must be free to alter these inclinations.⁹ This will no doubt not sound congenial to a defender of the Hegel-Williams line, but it would, arguably be in line with Schiller's attempt to reconcile a notion of 'beautiful soul' (Schiller, 1867: 275-6) with the requirements of duty. Although there is no space to argue this point here, I would pre-empt criticisms from the Hegel-Williams corner by pointing to Kant's understanding of freedom, which is an incompatibilist one. With the practical assumption of transcendental freedom, any claim that inclinations cannot be altered can be rejected. Ultimately, the choice of incentive is up to the agent on this incompatibilist account. This is best expressed in terms of what Allison (1990: 40) refers to as the Incorporation Thesis according to which the agent acts upon

⁸ There is, of course, the notion of *Gesinnung* (AA06:25), but this reflects rather one's fundamental disposition, as opposed to constituting a *bona fide* notion of practical self.

⁹ The "alteration of inclinations" here means: (i) bringing them under control (as Kant advocates for all inclinations MM:408), thus altering their strength or range, but also (ii) cultivating other, possibly new, inclinations (as we shall see later), which may counterbalance existing ones.

a freely chosen incentive that is incorporated into the maxim/principle of action.¹⁰

If this first response is largely a denial that my proposal is un-Kantian, the second claims that it is consistent with Kant's metaphysics. As explained above, the inclusion of inclinations among psychological circumstances amounts to viewing them as objects in inner sense. But, as we saw, inclinations are triggered by agreeable sensations (CJ:207), but sensations referred to the subject, not the object (CJ:206). Since, in so doing, sensation 'is not used for cognition at all' (ibid.), it is hard to see how inclinations which result from them should amount to objective determinations of an object, namely the psychological circumstances of the action.

My third response is a claim that the proposal is actually Kantian, and can be understood as congenial to, or even implied by, Kant's picture of agency in its intelligible/empirical duality. The empirical character is the law of the empirical causality of a human agent (A549-B577). That is, on the deterministic picture characterising the world of appearances (the empirical world) the agent acts on subjective maxims (A549-50/B577-78). This empirical character is presented by Kant as the appearance of, or as grounded in, the intelligible character. Since only phenomena can be known, it is plausible to present the empirical character, *qua chosen at the intelligible level*, as defining the agent's self from the practical point of view.

This empirical character is generally interpreted *practically* in terms of a belief-desire model whereby, given the knowledge available to the agent, a certain desire drives her agency. This practical interpretation is plausible: to say that an agent acts through subjective maxims, is to say that she desires to achieve certain ends in the light of her beliefs about her circumstances. This notion of desire expresses what Kant calls inclination, and it amounts to a practical

¹⁰ Sartre's powerful analysis of bad faith (from an equally incompatibilist notion of freedom) would apply to claims about the unalterability of inclinations.

interpretation of the *causal factors* involved in the empirical account of agency. Insofar as this is a practical interpretation, these inclinations do not determine any object in inner sense, in line with the second point above. This also provides no knowledge of the theoretical subject, in line with Kant's statement in CJ (206). Rather these inclinations characterise the agent in the empirical world from the practical point of view, in the same way as Kant will show that transcendental freedom characterises the agent in the intelligible world from the intelligible point of view (CPrR: 49). This gives us a good Kantian basis for characterising an individual in terms of "inclinations" typifying her empirical character, and viewed as ultimately chosen by her insofar as she has an intelligible nature.¹¹ At the end of this paper, I shall show that the introduction of such a notion of practical self is helpful in making sense of some of Kant's pronouncements in the MM.

B.

Moral Worth and Subordinate Inclinations

A role for inclinations in the implementation of duty

With this broader practical notion of self, when assessing the moral worth of agency, a lack of dependence upon favourable circumstances of inner sense need therefore not imply that no inclinations are operative in the action. What exactly this role could be, and

¹¹ These inclinations have a more or less strong grip on the agent. This practical notion of self does not, therefore, define a substantial notion of self with precise boundaries. This explains why Kant does not introduce any notion of phenomenal self as substance in the realm of appearances. It is rather in terms of its causal role in the world of appearances that I am characterising the self, in line with Kant's introduction of the notion of empirical character. Like the empirical character, it will evolve over time. The comments of an anonymous referee on this issue are gratefully acknowledged.

how inclinations could, as a result, have a part to play in morally worthy action needs to be clarified.

Importantly, any potential role of inclinations has to agree with the unambiguous statements we find in Kant's text. In GMM:397-8, Kant considers two cases of action out of inclination in such a way that the action coincides with the requirements of duty: the honest shopkeeper seeks this coincidence *because* it is good business; the sympathetically constituted agent *wants* to spread joy, and this happens to coincide with his duty. Kant contrasts these with an agent who does not commit suicide against his inclinations *out of* duty, and one who helps others against his inclinations *out of* duty. The latter are the only cases in which the action has moral worth. That is because, in the first two cases, the action is out of inclination and only contingently coincides with duty.

It would seem that Kant leaves no room for any contribution of inclinations to dutiful action and that is the standard interpretation, but a case which he has not examined, is that of an agent whose inclinations comply with duty, and whose action on these inclinations is controlled by duty. This would mean that duty would have the role of sanctioning the inclination driven action. I shall refer to this as the case of a dutiful benevolent agent.¹²

This type of example has been discussed in the Kantian literature, e.g. recently by Kerstein (2002:118-9;132-8). It is taken as a case in which it would be 'odd (...) to act from duty, rather than from inclination' (Kerstein, 2002:118-9). It is noteworthy however, that intuitions diverge among Kantian scholars on this point, as Timmermann's (2009:53) opinion indicates: 'Why would someone choose to be motivated by inclination *because* it happens to coincide with morality? Why not simply act on moral grounds right away?'.¹³ Setting aside for now the differences in their

¹² I am using 'dutiful' here to characterise the agent whose action is sanctioned by duty.

¹³ Timmermann's question follows from the assumption that the motive of duty is "present" here, since its "absence" would exclude moral worth.

interpretations of the motivational situation, what is common to both interpreters' understanding of it, is that duty features as 'backup motive' (Timmermann, 2009: 51), as Henson (1979) proposes. That is, it would be operative in doing the right thing, or preventing the agent from doing the wrong thing, were the inclination not coincident with duty. The implication is that, otherwise, it is not the motive here.¹⁴ Nevertheless, it seems that inclinations somehow do the work of duty here, and therefore arguably contribute to moral worth. This leads some (Kerstein, 2002: 38) to reject Kant's claim that it is necessary that an action be done from duty to have moral worth. It is therefore crucial to find a satisfactory way of elucidating this type of example, if Kant's claim of necessity is to be upheld. The interpretation I propose allows for a contribution of inclinations to morally worthy action, while upholding Kant's claim.

To understand the role of inclinations, we should draw the consequences from the above claim about the fact that the agent is characterised by her freely chosen empirical character. This involves a number of inclinations which she is more or less attached to (they are more or less central to who she is). These are the desires of the empirical account of agency, and so tell us nought about the motive the agent has chosen, i.e. about the intelligible account of her action. This might be thought to be an argument for ignoring the empirical account of action in ethics. And, indeed, discussion by Kantian scholars of Kant's ethics generally focuses exclusively upon the incentives which the agent acts upon insofar as he takes himself to be free.¹⁵ As we have seen above, however, when it comes to making sense of whether inclinations are involved in action, we cannot ignore the fact that the self, from a practical point of view, is characterised

¹⁴ Timmermann rightly rejects the proposed back-up role of duty as defining a morally worthy action, but this paper proposes a revised version of this role which has duty as the motive, and therefore is morally worthy.

¹⁵ This is true even for compatibilist accounts, although, here, the freedom shifts to that of the agent to determine his choices rationally, rather than a freedom of doing otherwise for particular actions (e.g. Rauscher, 2009).

by inclinations. This provides us with another way of looking at inclinations' role which goes beyond the dichotomy of Inclination¹⁶ and duty as the two motives a free agent can act upon. The claim in this paper is that this way of looking at inclinations in practical terms as *causal factors in the empirical account of action* captures some of what is at stake in the criticisms addressed to Kant's rigorism and which come to the fore in the case of the dutiful benevolent agent. Moreover, there is a methodological reason for thinking that this way of looking at inclinations is relevant against such criticisms: typically, these criticisms do not refer to the picture of transcendently free agency that lies at the heart of Kant's practical philosophy. Indeed, Humean critiques would not endorse the necessity of referring to such a picture. Kant's account can provide answers to these criticisms only *insofar* as Kant's account of agency attends to how an action is implemented in the world of appearances. And the empirical character with its characteristic inclinations is at the core of the empirical account this amounts to.

To help focus intuitions, consider my being moved to provide a beggar with food. The inclination to do this will present itself to me. I claim that I will act morally if I act on this inclination *insofar* as I have endorsed it as a form of action *that is dutiful*, and would not act upon it were it not compatible with the requirements of duty.¹⁷ That is, to

¹⁶ I shall capitalise the word when referring to the incentive that is taken up by the agent as sufficient for action, insofar as this agent views himself as transcendently free.

¹⁷ The time at which this endorsement takes place is not relevant to the moral value of the action. However, from what I said above, one might be tempted to conclude that this endorsement happened prior to the particular instance discussed in the example. However, inclinations are notoriously ill-defined, and to assume one has, once and for all, given an inclination the green light, as it were, is to assume that one knows, in all contexts, how this inclination will manifest itself (and to overlook the reality of the interaction of inclinations). The endorsement (or non-endorsement and correction) of the inclination is rather an on-going process, which translates the fact that the causal impact of the intelligible on the empirical character is not located in time.

answer the question I put at the beginning of this section, this role of the motive of duty will ensure the required lack of dependence upon favourable inclinations that is required by Kant's notion of unconditional good.

Another way of looking at this, is to say that the moral worth of the act springs from the endorsement of the inclination since it involves my taking this inclination as defining a way of acting aimed at satisfying it, a way of acting that I can simultaneously will to be universal law: referring to GMM II, I can indeed simultaneously will that all agents act on benevolent inclinations that accord with the requirements of duty. I will not be doing anything morally worthy, however, if I simply act on this inclination, without any regard for duty (GMM: 398). I would then be acting merely out of Inclination, i.e. Inclination would be the motive incorporated into my maxim/principle of action. However, inclinations, insofar as they are kept in check by duty, are properly described as *subordinate inclinations*. They are not, in themselves, morally worthy. But acting on them is morally worthy insofar as they are guided and controlled by duty. I shall refer to this as the case of the dutiful benevolent agent.

I see this role of inclinations as continuous with that which commentators do agree upon (see Timmermann, 2009:60), namely the part which they play in specifying the detail of any action out of duty. Let us suppose that, although I am otherwise inclined, I decide to help a beggar by providing food. A number of inclinations present themselves which will ensure the type of food, its quantity, its presentation, are specified. As long as these do not conflict with duty, they are endorsed.

From what was explained above, I claim that these motivations are the desires involved in a practical understanding of the *empirical* account of action. This seems a plausible account. The alternative would be the claim that these are to be viewed as Inclinations that are taken as sufficient for action on the *intelligible* account of action. But this would

not reflect their *subordinate* status, i.e. their being part of the implementation of the requirements of duty in the world of appearances.¹⁸ Indeed, the fact that we are looking at an implementation of duty requires that such inclinations *not be taken* to be sufficient grounds of action: only duty must be such a ground. They are but the empirical desires implementing the requirements of duty. Accounting for the role of these inclinations as desires involved in the empirical account of the action, i.e. characteristics of his self, avoids such worries, and is intuitively more plausible.

I am suggesting the same interpretation applies to the case of the benevolent inclination towards the beggar, with duty as motive playing a “supervisory” role, that of endorsing or not the inclinations that prompt action, and the whole of the action involving subordinate inclinations.

Subordinate inclinations and motivation

There is however an immediate worry here, namely that there is a clear difference between the dutiful benevolent agent, and the role of inclinations in specifying the detail of an action. In the case of the dutiful benevolent agent, the inclination to help the beggar is the starting point for the action of helping him. In the case of specifying the detail of the help to be provided out of duty, the subordinate inclinations are arguably involved at a later stage in the action. This seems to reflect a difference of priority, with an Inclination being the real incentive or *Triebfeder* in the first case, while duty is the incentive in the second.¹⁹

¹⁸ The subordinate role of the inclinations defining the detail of the action is in line with the interpretation of the principle/maxim of the action that is examined for its moral worth, being understood as a general principle of action (Kuehn, 2009; Onof, 1998), thereby avoiding standard problems of failure to pass the test of the CI because of the amount of detail that is included in the specification of the principle/maxim (e.g. see Illies, 2007:313).

¹⁹ This is the worry which underpins the ‘back-up’ role of duty as discussed by Timmermann (2009:51-53). But the case I am discussing differs from that

Grounds for such a view are most readily found in the difference in temporal ordering characterising the motivational structure of the action in each case. What we might call the temporal profile of the dutiful benevolent agent's action is marked by an appeal to one of the formulas of the Categorical Imperative (CI), to assess whether his action is permissible. This appeal manifests itself *after* a benevolent inclination has presented the provision of help as a desirable form of action. The temporal profile of the agent who experiences no such inclination but helps out of duty appears to be triggered by consulting the moral law, which reveals that the only forms of permissible action involves providing some kind of help.²⁰

This distinction between temporal profiles is, arguably, somewhat simplified insofar as the non-benevolent agent is only able to recognise what her duty is, if she is sensitive to the need for help that is on display. It seems theoretically possible for the moral salience of the situation (Herman, 1993:77-8) to be perceived without any inclination to provide help, although in most cases, I suspect that some (possibly very weak) inclination is experienced (Herman, 1993:25).²¹ Whatever the case may be, the important difference with the other case is that, for the non-benevolently inclined agent, any such inclination is insufficiently strong or overriding of contrary inclinations to move the agent to provide help. So the situation of this non-benevolent agent is one in which an inclination contrary to duty (e.g. laziness) prevails when the appeal to the CI is made which reveals that this is not permissible.

in which duty is a mere back-up incentive. Rather, I am arguing that duty is the real motive here.

²⁰ There is no space here to contribute to the debate around whether a broad duty such as that of beneficence calls for action in all instances in which an agent encounters someone in need, and I am assuming that the requirement of duty is such that, in this case, help is called for by the moral law.

²¹ I think it is possible to say that this is the case, even when the agent has sadistic tendencies. Moreover, it would seem, on the grounds of efficiency which will be discussed below, that we have a duty to 'sympathise actively in' the fate of those who are in need of help (MM:457).

The difference with the dutiful benevolent agent now therefore seems to be one of distinct inclinations. The non-benevolent agent's immoral inclination not to help is blocked by the moral law which then has to define a permissible course of action. The benevolent agent's moral inclination passes the test of the CI, so he proceeds to provide the help he is inclined to give. When the different situations are represented in this way, to assign moral worth to the first and not the second agent's action would seem to make the assignment of moral worth *dependent* upon what kind of inclinations are present. Since this is obviously contrary to the definition of the unconditional good, the temporal profiles provide no grounds for discriminating between the goodness of these two actions: both represent an implementation of duty.

The fact that it is anyway misleading to draw conclusions from the temporal motivational profiles of both actions, can be seen by recalling Kant's distinction in the CPR between the *Quid juris?* and the *Quid facti?* Questions (A84/B116). These questions arise in relation to synthetic a priori judgements. In practical philosophy, the issue of whether the judgement that an action is good, raises an issue of justification, i.e. a *Quid juris?* question. The answer to that question cannot involve appealing to the genesis of the action. What makes such an appeal tempting in the practical case is the notion that the inclination which proposes the action represents the key incentive, as the word *Triebfeder* suggests. But the notion of *Triebfeder* does not, in fact, refer to time. If I build a dam across a river to generate electricity, it is not the water flowing downstream that is the trigger of this production. It is my releasing/channelling the stored water onto my turbine which is the trigger. I have full control over the water stored behind the sluice gate. And I use it for my own purposes: I can stop it from flowing further, or I can channel it through the sluice gate to produce electricity. In the same way, the dutiful benevolent agent's appeal to the moral law to check his action, has total control over the subsequent developments. Should this appeal reveal

his action is immoral, he would not go ahead with it. This would be the case, were his action to infringe the moral law.

Thus, duty's endorsement or rejection of the action prompted by an inclination, defines it as an action that has its incentive in duty, although the content of the action is the object of the agent's inclination. And the inclinations which define the course of the action are therefore *subordinate inclinations*. If the action defined by these inclinations is endorsed as what is required by duty, it *ought* to go ahead.

These subordinate inclinations therefore implement the commands of duty in the empirical account of agency. They provide an answer to the question which Guevara (2000) asks, namely: what inclinations are involved in the empirical account of action out of duty? Typically, this question receives the answer that it is respect for the moral law that is the relevant term filling in the empirical account of action out of duty (e.g. Rauscher, 2009:209fn; GMM:460). Aside from the fact that this respect is thereby treated as an inclination, although Kant expressly indicates that it is not an inclination, this answer does not account for the obvious diversity of actions out of duty in terms of their empirical content. This is not to say that respect does not play a role. On the contrary, since it represents the affective dimension of moral motivation, it is respect for the moral law which mobilises inclinations in the service of duty when the agent has to act against prevailing inclinations. That means: either mustering pre-existing (but currently dormant) inclinations; or triggering action, and thereby planting the seeds for new inclinations, through habituation. It is in this sense that inclinations contribute to morally worthy action: as the desires of a belief-desire model of the empirical account of moral action.

The conclusion reached so far is that the dutiful benevolent agent is no different from a dutiful agent in terms of the moral worth of his action. The diverging intuitions displayed by Kerstein (2002:118-9) and Timmermann (2009:52-3) to the question of whether duty requires one to act 'out of duty' when duty and inclinations converge are

accommodated by the present proposal. The action must indeed be ‘out of duty’ as Timmermann rightly claims, but it can involve inclinations, as Kerstein correctly points out. The claim is that the action is wrongly described as being *out of inclination* once it is clear that duty is endorsing it as a way of implementing what duty requires. A reformulation of the question might now compare (a) letting the original act prompted by the inclination go ahead, i.e. to let the inclination pursue its course *because it is dutiful*, so that it is therefore under the *control* of the motive of duty; and (b) to ask for duty to redefine a new action. And the answer has to be that there are no grounds in duty for demanding something like (b) since duty has endorsed the action proposed by the inclination described in (a).

C.

Moral Worth of the Action and the Agent

The agent's moral worth

The interpretation proposed here does not assign more moral worth to the action of the dutiful agent who has no inclinations to act dutifully, than to the dutiful benevolent agent. It is of course well known that Kant pours praise upon the agent who acts out of duty when he is not so inclined (GMM:398). This is what triggers Schiller's ironic remark known as Schiller's joke (Paton, 1958:48). Why does Kant do this, and how does the proposed interpretation make sense of this? A standard reply to the first question consists in emphasising that in this agent's action, duty is isolated from any other possible motivating factors. The claim would therefore be that it appears all the more clearly, like a star would in the night sky.

Although this is congenial to the interpretation I have proposed so far, and, I think, correct, I want to suggest that there is more to be said here. There is something else that

Kant is drawing our attention to, which appears all the more clearly in this agent. Recall that Kant later claims that duty commands us to develop inclinations which are conducive to our doing our duty (MM:457). Namely, he is aware of the obstacles that are to be overcome in doing one's duty without the support of pre-existing active inclinations.²² On the present interpretation, duty will have the task of mobilising one or more "dormant" inclinations,²³ or giving rise to new ones. Thus action out of duty without pre-existing supporting inclinations involves duty 'doing more'.²⁴ This is the role of the feeling of respect: it enables duty to trigger action. To use the analogy of the hydro-electric generation of electrical power, here, water is not already flowing and available to be channelled for the right purposes. Water has to be brought to the turbines, pumped there.

What does this mean in terms of moral worth? Kant himself gives us a clue here, by talking, aside from the moral worth of the dutiful non-benevolent agent's action, about his moral worth as an agent: 'would not he find in himself a source from which to give himself a far higher worth than he would have got by having a good-natured temperament?' (GMM: 398). That is, the issue at stake is indeed that moral worth shines all the brighter because of the absence of pre-existing inclinations, but it is in particular *the agent's moral worth* that one is thereby made aware of. Let us see how this distinction between the action's and the agent's worth can be motivated.

²² Inclinations could exist but not be active. An extreme case of this would be the lack of drive characterising the depressed agent.

²³ See footnote 22.

²⁴ A dormant inclination can be "awoken" and made use of. I may thus help the beggar by viewing this action as similar to that of helping my ailing uncle, and thereby use this inclination which was otherwise dormant, out of respect for the moral law. More generally, the "channelling" of one's energies is a way of mustering inclinations for a certain purpose (Rosenblatt and Thickstun, 1970). As for the notion of giving rise to inclinations, it is respect which steers the development of my action; in so doing, it creates a new inclination (however weak). This is a purely empirical claim, but we will see that it involves a characterisation of the way in which intelligible choices are manifested in the realm of appearances.

The moral worth of the agent can be understood as the moral worth of this agent's *possible* actions. In other words, this notion addresses the much discussed issue of the agent's *moral fitness* (Henson, 1979). Henson points out that Kant is often interpreted as working with a 'battle citation' model of the moral worth of an action, in which such moral worth accrues only to actions done out of duty against inclination, or at least, without any inclination coinciding with duty. This is, for instance, the view taken by Schiller in his joke (Paton, 1958:48). To this implausible interpretation, he opposes a 'fitness report' understanding of moral worth. This takes the action of a dutiful benevolent agent to be morally worthy as long as it would have been done out of duty, had duty alone been available as a motive. This is the 'back-up' role of duty discussed above. Henson is in effect assuming overdetermination here (with inclination and duty as the two motives) and introducing modal considerations to assess the fitness of the motive of duty. This modal move is, as I have suggested, the right way to understand Kant's praise for the agent acting out of duty against her inclinations.

But the description of this as a case of overdetermination is untenable. Kant's understanding of motivation in *Religion within the Boundaries of Pure Reason* (AA06:24) clearly states that a single incentive is taken as sufficient for any particular action. This is a key feature of Allison's (1990:40) Incorporation Thesis presented earlier in the paper. There cannot therefore be any real overdetermination, unless this amounts to conflating the two levels of description of agency, so that the incentives operating in the belief-desire description of action, and duty as incentive freely chosen by the agent, are viewed as providing an overdetermination of action. But that would be to misunderstand the results of the Third Antinomy which keeps these levels apart as empirical and intelligible descriptions respectively.

Herman (1993: 7-13) points out another key problem with Henson's 'fitness report' model, namely that it can exist in a weak or strong form. The weak form has it that if duty had been the only motive, i.e. if the agent had

experienced no feeling of benevolence, the agent would have acted dutifully. Herman points out that this is too weak, as it does not tell us what the agent would have done had her inclination become antagonistic to duty. But then a strong interpretation would seem to require moral heroism, i.e. that one would have done the right thing, however strong one's aversion to the action.

Herman's conclusion that, since neither weak nor strong interpretations of the 'fitness model' will do, such modal considerations are out of place, would seem to follow. However, this view has rightly been criticised (Sorrell, 1978; Allison, 1990:115-116) as failing to meet the second requirement for morally good actions, as set out at the start of the paper, namely that its moral worth not be accidental. And indeed, such modal considerations would seem called for to provide a satisfactory interpretation of Kant's praise for action out of duty with no supporting inclinations.

Allison's (1990:116-118) solution to this dilemma involves shifting the debate to focus upon the incentive which is 'taken up' into the maxim/principle of action. This is a single one: it cannot be a disjunction of incentives. It alone determines the moral worth of the action. Although this is correct, this does not directly address the way in which modal considerations are relevant. Additionally, the interpretation proposed in this paper has stressed the importance of viewing particular actions as involving inclinations in their empirical descriptions. In considering actions with different inclinations, it is *different actions* which are considered: it is no longer the moral worth of the particular action that is at stake.

I think one can therefore do justice to Herman's (1993: 11) rejecting the idea that the moral worth of an action should involve considering other possible inclinations (or their absence), while accepting that such possibilities are relevant to assessing moral worth in some sense. As indicated above, this involves describing the moral worth in question as that of a set of possible actions. Insofar as action from duty gives rise to new inclinations or strengthens

existing ones (through habituation) which act as subordinate inclinations under the control of the motive of duty, and that such subordinate inclinations characterise the agent's self in a practical sense, we can now see in what sense this moral worth is the *agent's moral worth*. Those inclinations which are acquired through dutiful action, are thus the mark of the agent's moral worth in the temporal order.

So, the unconditional good of the good will is therefore not simply apportioned to moral actions, but also to the moral agent. This distinction is called for on the present interpretation as there are two different levels of moral worth that emerge: on the one hand, with whatever pre-existing inclinations the agent happens to have, certain acts will be performed out of duty. These are, for instance, the acts of the dutiful benevolent agent. But the modal issues arising in the discussion of the fitness report model pertain to the assessment of the moral worth of the agent. Insofar as the agent has developed such benevolent inclinations, he has demonstrated the fitness of his motive of duty.

In the first part of the paper, it has been argued that inclinations contribute to morally worthy action. Now,²⁵ we see how the acquisition of new inclinations and the growth of existing ones is a manifestation in the world of appearances of the agent's moral worth.²⁶ While the moral worth of an action is manifested at a particular point in time, the agent's moral worth appears over the agent's lifetime. Since this moral worth is characterised by *developments* in my inclinations, it is thus reasonable to view these as defining a notion of *moral progress* which is the appearance in time of the agent's moral worth. Another way of putting this is to view the agent's moral worth as that of his intelligible character, which is reflected in the determination over time

²⁵ I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for making me rethink the issues in this paragraph.

²⁶ This does not imply that one can infer anything about the agent's moral worth from these empirical manifestations since sympathetic inclinations could be acquired for non-moral purposes (e.g. as in the case of a pleasantly disposed shop-keeper whose motivations are similar to those of Kant's honest shopkeeper, GMM:397).

of an empirical character with its characteristic inclinations.²⁷

This interpretation goes beyond the letter of much of Kant's text, but there are textual indications that it is at least congenial to Kant's views. First, the notion of an agent's moral worth can be understood as corresponding to the agent's *Gesinnung*. This is 'the ultimate subjective ground of the adoption of maxims' (AA06: 25). As such, it is this ground that determines the fitness of the agent's incentive of duty, i.e. indicates how the agent will act in possible circumstances.²⁸ Second, the indirect duty to develop our compassionate inclinations (MM:457) can be interpreted as reflecting a duty to develop morally, thus echoing the proposed notion of moral progress. Such positive moral progress is the temporal manifestation of a good *Gesinnung*. At the empirical level, this development amounts to a strengthening of subordinate inclinations and the development of new ones.²⁹ Third, the convergence of inclinations and duty which Schiller seeks, is also a goal for Kant.³⁰ Thus Kant says that 'a heart which is happy in the performance of its duty (not merely complacent in the recognition thereof) is a mark of genuineness in the virtuous disposition' (AA06:

²⁷ It is not only in the case of dutiful action *against* existing inclinations that this is manifested, but also in any endorsement of existing subordinate inclinations which thereby strengthens them. But it is in the first case that this manifestation is the more evident, hence Kant's singling out the example of the beneficent agent with no sympathy for mankind (GMM:398-399).

²⁸ It is not the purpose of this paper to analyse this notion in detail. It will have to suffice that I suggest that such a notion should not be viewed as a choice which is somehow prior to the agent's developments, but rather as a choice which this very development reflects. One way of making sense of this is to view the appearing of this *Gesinnung* in the empirical world as an unfolding in time of this timeless notion from the intelligible point of view, and as a constructive process in time (notion of moral progress) from the empirical point of view.

²⁹ These developments also contribute to making our moral action more efficient (see footnote 54). What we now see is how these empirical features of the development of inclinations are a temporal manifestation of the agent's moral worth.

³⁰ Kant would rightly insist upon a clear controlling role for duty that Schiller may not have accepted.

23-24n). This is exactly what is entailed in the proposed notion of moral worth of the agent.

Another interpretation

Before considering important concerns with the proposed interpretation of duty, I shall examine another well-established interpretation which will provide useful insights into the present interpretation. The distinction between the two agents of my example is that which Herman examines when she distinguishes acting ‘from principle’ and ‘on a motive that gives an agent concern for the conformity of his action to a principle’. But Herman adopts another interpretation of the motivational situation. In the case of action which is constrained by the moral law in the way our benevolent agent’s action is when he consults its conformity to duty, Herman (1993: 14-5) and Baron (1995: 131) distinguish between a *primary* motive which is not duty if the action is merely permissible, and a *secondary* one which is duty. These authors’ analyses, originally designed to give an account of the motivational structure underlying permissible action, were extended to obligatory action by Benson (1987: 397-80). As he sees it ‘knowing that an action must be performed can authoritatively govern conduct, while non-moral concerns directly motivate it’ (ibid.).

Prima facie, this claim is congenial to the proposal in this paper, but the motivational interpretation is different. Allison criticizes the claim for not properly distinguishing between the cases of morally permissible and obligatory action. In the first case, permissibility is not a sufficient reason for choosing to act in the proposed way, while an action’s being obligatory is. This difference does not seem to be reflected by the mere proposal that in both cases, duty must be operating regulatively “in the background” as it were (Allison, 1990:119-120). Although Allison’s critique does not fully seem to take on board the fruitfulness of Benson’s proposal, he is right to point out that this issue of sufficiency is not addressed by Benson.

Does the notion of subordinate inclinations introduced in this paper also fail to deal with this issue adequately? The proposed interpretation is that subordinate inclinations implement an obligatory form of action in the same way as they operate to define the detail of any permissible action. The worry may be that this does not properly reflect the difference between permissible and obligatory action. But this difference is sometimes misunderstood, in particular when the permissible is simply equated with the morally indifferent. There is no space to address this issue in detail here. Two points should be made to show the interconnectedness of the permissible and the obligatory. First, it is always obligatory to act in a permissible way. Second, a type of action is considered obligatory insofar as the range of permissible action contains only this type of action. But insofar as there are many action tokens belonging to this type, there is still a wealth of permissible implementations here. So no strong permissible/obligatory divide needs to be reflected in our understanding of moral motivation.³¹

The important concern flagged by Allison, is that of whether duty is a *sufficient* motive when a type of action is morally required, and this is not clearly addressed by the Baron-Herman-Benson dual motivation (BHB-DM) proposal. It is, however, in the proposal in this paper: if the agent has understood that the situation gives rise to a requirement of duty, any inclination not to act accordingly (e.g. rather in pursuit of a competing end) is overridden by the incentive of duty controlling the agent's actions. In terms of action type, if a certain type is obligatory, this is equivalent to a com-

³¹ One might worry that moral worth accrues to permissible action on my interpretation (e.g. Kerstein, 2002:137). This worry is connected with cases of morally indifferent action. But there are few situations (arguably none?), in which I have no duties constraining my action. My compliance with the requirements of duty simply captures my attending to these constraints, and this is morally worthy. This may not give us much insight into the agent's moral worth, but it is morally worthy as an action. The role of duty is, in fact, greater than may at first appear: in my aim to relax for instance (see Kerstein, 2002:137), I shall choose ways that do not impair my ability to do my duty, and which even make me better able to do it, in line with Kant's claim we have an indirect duty to secure our own happiness (GMM:399).

mand to act in ways defined by that action type.³² The specification of the action token may then draw upon subordinate inclinations.

There are other reasons for being dissatisfied with the BHB-DM picture. The appeal to two motives is difficult to reconcile with Kant's understanding of rational agency as expressed by Allison's Incorporation Thesis. As we saw above, this requires that a single incentive be incorporated into a maxim/principle of action.

The two concerns above are related: the fact that it is not clear that duty as a secondary motive would be sufficient in cases where inclinations and duty do not converge, suggests that duty must be the sole motive in the intelligible account of the action. Although he does not appeal to the empirical/intelligible distinction in his analysis, Stratton-Lake (2000:54-57) reaches the same conclusion in his criticism of the BHB-DM picture. More specifically, Stratton-Lake asks whether an obligatory act can be done from a non-moral primary motive with duty as a secondary motive. The problem is that, for Herman, the agent's acting from the secondary motive of duty is not acting *from the motive of duty*. It would therefore seem that doing the obligatory act out of duty can only happen if duty is the primary motive.

As Stratton-Lake notes (2000:56), Baron's understanding of the motivational picture is somewhat different in that, here, the secondary motive does not merely have a regulative role, but also expresses the agent's *commitment* to morality. Stratton-Lake (ibid.) argues that this is still not sufficient to deal with the problem, as the reason for acting in the required obligatory way must be 'the reason why the act ought to be done'. But this is just to say that the primary

³² Any worries that not acting in certain ways is not equivalent to acting in different ways should be dispelled as inaction is here understood as a form of action (e.g. motivated by laziness). This is consistent with Kant's understanding of our transcendental freedom: one cannot abstain from choosing, a point which Sartre later rightly emphasised.

motive has to be the ‘lawlike nature of the agent’s maxim’, and cannot be any inclination.³³

The proposal in this paper has it that action from duty is characterized by having the incentive of duty in a controlling role: it is not merely regulative, as Herman’s secondary motive is, and it does not only reflect a commitment to morality, as Baron’s secondary motive does. It is the only incentive relevant to assessing the moral worth of the action. The presence of inclinations in the empirical description of the action shows how they contribute to morally worthy action, and reflect the agent’s moral worth. The fact that action may be prompted by an inclination is not morally relevant, and should not be interpreted in terms of making this inclination into a (primary) motive of the action. Rather, the valid intuitions behind the BHB-DM proposals are here integrated within a consideration of the dual empirical/intelligible account of action which underpins Kant’s practical philosophy.

D.

The Ground of Normativity

Focusing upon a standard objection

The proposed interpretation does, however, encounter a problem: it appears not to pay due attention to an apparent important difference between the two agents in our example. This is a difference in focus between an agent who has a real attachment to the other’s welfare, while the other agent treats his action “merely” as the fulfilling of an obligation.

³³ That is, the justification is the lawlike nature of the maxim on the ‘justificatory conception of the categorical imperative’ which underpins the standard interpretation (and in particular Herman and Baron’s views). But Stratton-Lake wants to question this interpretation, and as we shall see further in the paper, as a result he develops a novel dual motivation picture.

The difference is clearly expressed by Timmermann (2009:53): namely, when acting from duty, it is the action, i.e. its content, that is the focus of interest; whereas, action from Inclination is focused upon the outcome. On Timmermann's interpretation, this is ammunition against viewing the dutiful benevolent agent as acting *out of* duty. On the present interpretation, it should be clear that paying attention to what morality commands involves the action being viewed as implementing the agent's duty. So, the dutiful benevolent agent is, from that point of view, equivalent to the agent with no benevolent inclinations acting out of duty.

But if that were the whole story, action out of duty would risk falling foul of the well-known criticism which Williams (1981:18) addresses to Kantian ethics with his 'one thought too many' objection. This criticism, applied to our case, amounts to querying the meaning of the agent's consulting the moral law when he is acting on an inclination (which coincides with it). For Williams, this amounts to his having the "additional thought" that it is an issue he cares about (and, indeed, which has paramount importance) whether his inclination can be endorsed by morality or not. The criticism is that this man's action is motivated by the wrong reasons, namely that his action be dutiful, whereas what is important is the manifest neediness of the agent requiring help. This criticism is directly related to the broader issue discussed above, namely the Williams/Hegel claim that Kantian ethics alienates us from our true selves. Indeed, the view that Kant's ethics of duty require us to override any inclinations or emotions we may experience, means that emotions and inclinations have no moral worth. This leads to the claim that Kant's ethics alienate us from any emotions that represent what we value.

This matter has been discussed extensively in the literature (e.g. Allison, 1990:194-198; Baron, 1995:136-140; Herman, 1993:24-29; Baron, 2008), and there is no space to analyse in detail how the proposed approach relates to these

views. In brief, a first response which addresses Williams's critique head on, is Herman's claim (1993:25) that it is crucial to be able to distinguish the *end* from the *motive* of the action. Although these may be identical, they can also come apart. This is what happens in the case of our non-benevolent agent acting out of duty: although he is motivated by duty, the end of his action is the provision of help. This seems to be a correct response to the Williams line of criticism. In terms of the present proposal, it takes on the following form. The incentive for the action is that which I, as transcendently free agent, incorporate into my principle of action. The empirical account has it that one or more motivating factors determine my action. These are desires to achieve ends in the light of my beliefs about the nature of the empirical circumstances. The ends of my action are therefore at the heart of the empirical account of the action since they are definitive of the desires determining it. As Herman puts it 'the motive of duty functions at least as well as the emotion-based motive in maintaining the agent's attachment to the goal of saving someone through unsuccessful attempts' (1993:29).

However, Herman recognises that this still leaves some of Williams's concerns untouched. That is, 'what seems lacking [in the agent who acts out of duty] is the appropriate attitude and reason for action' (Herman, 1993:30). In other words, the motive of duty does not seem to be what is "appropriate" given the situation. One could, of course, reject such concerns as irrelevant, and point to Williams's distinct conception of morality. But, insofar as one addresses Williams's view of Kant's moral theory as alienating to the self, as a legitimate concern for a Kantian, one cannot simply dismiss Williams's related criticism of the notion of acting out of duty. And indeed, Herman responds to Williams's criticism by introducing the distinction between primary and secondary motives discussed above. We have seen that this distinction is problematic, and in particular noted its apparent incompatibility with the Incorporation Thesis, as well as Stratton-Lake's related criticism of it.

Addressing a broader worry

Before examining how the present proposal deals with this question, it is useful to examine how Stratton-Lake, following T.C. Williams's lead (1968),³⁴ alters the BHB-DM picture to address what is in fact a broader question than Williams's. Insofar as Stratton-Lake's proposal is itself a new dual motivation picture, one might be tempted *prima facie* to reject it because of the Incorporation Thesis, as above. However, he states clearly (Stratton-Lake, 2000:63) that 'there is an important sense in which one can act *solely* from duty on my account'.

What is particularly interesting for our purposes here is that Stratton-Lake seeks to understand action out of duty while rejecting the standard interpretative picture according to which the fact that I ought to do something is a *reason* for doing it. Insofar as he does not accept that the moral bindingness of a type of action is a proper reason for doing it, he is expressing a concern of which Williams's is a more specific form. While Williams worries that the reasons relating to emotions are not the reasons for action out of duty, Stratton-Lake more generally worries that the wrong reasons are adduced in the standard account of action out of duty, namely the reason that an action ought to be done because it is called for by the moral law. But while Williams takes this as a critique of Kant's ethics, Stratton-Lake staunchly defends Kant's claim that only acting out of duty has moral worth.

Stratton-Lake's solution is to adopt a version of the dual motivation picture. On the Stratton-Lake dual motivation (SL-DM) picture, an agent acting out of duty acts from 'an unconditional commitment to morality as a secondary motive' (as in Baron's proposal), and is 'motivated at the primary level to do what one should by nothing other than the reasons why the act is morally required' (Stratton-Lake,

³⁴ I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this book.

2000:63). The dual motivation picture is in fact a device to encapsulate two different kinds of reasons for acting: *normative* and *motivational* reasons.³⁵ The first provide the justification for the action, while the second are psychological states (beliefs, desires) for Stratton-Lake (2000:21). Although these are clearly distinct, the connection between rationality and morality must be maintained as it is essential to Kant's project (Stratton-Lake, 2000:27). This, Stratton-Lake achieves by having what he refers to as 'the ground of duty' (Stratton-Lake, 2000:63), i.e. what motivates the agent, act as normative reason for the dutiful agent.

This is not the place to carry out an analysis of the merits of this very interesting proposal which has already been much discussed. I shall just point to the fact that it requires abandoning the standard interpretative conception of the moral law as the ground of duty, since the fact that the action is obligatory cannot be the reason to do it. In its place, the SL-DM picture puts the specific reasons giving rise to a duty, e.g. the neediness of the agent requiring help in our example. The moral law is then assigned a transcendental role, i.e. it accounts for how it is possible that there be such duties. Whether this does justice to the role of Kant's formulations of the moral law as Categorical Imperative, in their use to assess compliance with the requirements of the moral law of types of action, is questionable.

A related concern is that of specifying the exact nature of the ground of duty that provides the normative reason for action out of duty. It would appear that this ground should, for Stratton-Lake, amount to certain facts, e.g. that an agent needs help. In this way, Stratton-Lake can explain how the merely benevolent agent who is related emotionally to this fact, will be motivated to act, while the agent acting morally (whether benevolently or not), will be motivated by the duty which is made apparent through this fact. But here lies the

³⁵ This is in line with a dominant view in contemporary analytic philosophy of action, according to which justificatory (normative) reasons should be distinguished from explanatory (motivational) reasons (see Alvarez, 2010, for insightful analyses of reasons for action).

problem: if this fact is to act as the ground of duty, the dutiful requirement must be made apparent, i.e. the fact must be accompanied by an awareness of the constraints of the moral law, together with how they apply in this case. It would therefore seem, *pace* Stratton-Lake (2000:66) that the motivation cannot be grounded in a *mere* fact, but additionally, that the reasons must include the moral law.³⁶ This, however, as we have just seen, is the wrong kind of reason for Stratton-Lake.

Whether or not Stratton-Lake's account can address these issues, it is clear that his understanding of motivation is not Kant's. He favours a belief-desire account of motivation as a psychological phenomenon, whereas for Kant, the free choice of incentive is made at the intelligible level. The problem we have just flagged, which is connected with running the two motivational accounts in parallel would, I contend, be dispelled if Kant's dual empirical/intelligible account were used.³⁷ I shall describe how Stratton-Lake's proposal can be mapped onto this dual account. This mapping will have the additional benefit for the proposal in this paper that Stratton-Lake's distinction between normative and motivational reasons shows how the Kantian dual empirical/intelligible account of action can be further understood in practical terms.

The mapping works as follows. On the belief-desire model which can be applied to Kant's empirical account of

³⁶ Stratton-Lake (2000:66-67) wants to have any reference to the moral law confined to the secondary motive. This might deal with the vetoing power of duty when the proposed action is not permissible (although it does not provide an account of the nature of the choice that is the commitment to duty), but this is not enough to account for the action of the non-benevolent dutiful agent who has to construct his action from mere respect for the moral law.

³⁷ Note that when Stratton-Lake (2000:63) describes the motivational reasons for action out of duty, he says that 'one takes oneself to have sufficient reason to do some obligatory act', which recalls Allison's emphasis, in the Incorporation Thesis, upon the 'taking as' that characterises the intelligible account as Kant views it. For Allison (1990:38), this characterizes 'a model of deliberative rationality in terms of which choice involves (...) a taking as'. These activities are 'expressions of spontaneity' (*ibid.*), and represent the intelligible account of agency for Kant which is incompatibilist.

agency, an action is viewed as driven by the desire to achieve a certain end, given certain beliefs about the situation. That is, the action is understood as focused upon the end which provides its empirical *normative* reason.³⁸ The primary motive of the SL-DM account is therefore an empirical motive providing an empirical justification of the action. But the intelligible account of action has it that the action is motivated either by an Inclination which is (or underpins) the inclination I have to achieve this end, or by the duty which arises in this situation. The secondary motive of the SL-DM account, is therefore Kant's notion of incentive, which makes sense insofar as the agent takes herself to be transcendently free, i.e. as the originator of a new causal series, in her taking a motive as incentive for action.³⁹

With this mapping in place, Kant has a different account of the link between the empirical normative and motivational accounts than that suggested by Stratton-Lake. Stratton-Lake has it that the first provides the ground of duty, so that the primary motive given by the normative reasons defines the ground for the secondary motive which, either endorses—or *not* if this is not a proper ground—these reasons as *explanatory* reasons. Kant has the grounding relation going the other way. That is, the normative reasons are empirical facts that provide empirical grounds for action

³⁸ I shall refer to “empirical” normativity when the justifications involved do not include any reference to the intelligible description of an action.

³⁹ The reader may have expected the mapping to go the other way, i.e. for the normative and motivational reasons to map onto the intelligible and empirical accounts respectively. Such a mapping would translate a not uncommon intuition that the intelligible account deals with the rational justification of action, while the empirical account deals with motives as psychological features of a belief-desire model. Such an interpretation would be congenial to compatibilist readings of Kant's notion of freedom (Skorupski, 2009:163-6; Rauscher, 2009:209-13). As regards this empirical account however, it ignores Kant's theory of motivation, as expressed in the Incorporation Thesis. This clearly locates motivation at the intelligible level, in the choice of an incentive for action. As regards the intelligible account, in the next paragraph, I shall claim that this intelligible choice has a key role to play with respect to empirical normativity: it claims to ground it. There are thus both intelligible and empirical aspects to normativity, the first grounding the second.

on a belief-desire model of action *insofar* as the agent's intelligible choice of duty as incentive endorses them as such (since the intelligible character is the cause of the empirical character).⁴⁰ That is, the motivational reason provides an explanation of why the proposed empirical end of an action is indeed worth pursuing. The intelligible account of the nature of the motive chosen as incentive by the agent, provides what the agent takes as *ground for the normativity* governing his action in the realm of appearances (empirical normativity). Only if this incentive is duty, does this ground provide a valid justification; i.e. only when the agent chooses to act out of duty,⁴¹ do the pursuits of his various specific ends have a valid ground.⁴²

This explanation converges towards Korsgaard's (1996) own response to these Williams-type criticisms in which she disagrees with Nagel's realism (1996:203) about reasons for action. As I understand her, Korsgaard would agree that the benevolent agents' inclinations do not change because of the decision to consult their conformity to duty (Korsgaard, 1996:244). What changes is what she calls the 'principle of choice' (op.cit.:243). For Korsgaard, the reason for action should be understood as the inclination 'as seen from the perspective of the principle of choice' (ibid.). This provides

⁴⁰ The empirical normativity in question defines an obligation for the agent. As Korsgaard (1996:257) puts it, 'there is a real sense in which you are bound by a law you make for yourself until you make another'. On the present interpretation, this practical empirical normativity is connected to causal laws insofar as the part of the empirical character defined by this normative choice identifies causal laws of action on corresponding inclinations. Of course, as the empirical character is not fully unified by this choice, there are other parts of agent's empirical character which will govern action that infringes this practical empirical normativity.

⁴¹ In the act of choosing a motive to act upon, the agent takes an incentive as sufficient ground for action. This thereby provides a justification for the pursuit of whatever end this action is directed at. This justification is valid if this ground is duty. Otherwise the proposed norms do not fulfil the universality requirements (universality "in conception", and universality in the will).

⁴² The necessity and sufficiency of duty as valid ground for all empirical normativity is, in effect, the problem of the grounding of the moral law. For an examination of the problems arising from the claims of sufficiency as well as necessity, see Onof (2009).

further insight into how to interpret the way in which the choice of incentive at the intelligible level relates to the inclinations involved in agency. We have just seen how an interpretation of the SL-DM proposal leads to viewing the intelligible choice as providing a ground for the normativity of our action in the empirical world. Now Korsgaard's interpretation brings out the sense in which normative reasons insofar as they are thus grounded, are viewed as *reasons from the perspective of the agent's intelligible choice*.⁴³

This can also be put in the language of section II of GMM, empirical normativity is characterised by action on hypothetical imperatives characterising the belief-desire model.⁴⁴ The only categorical imperatives are those enjoining the agent to act out of duty.⁴⁵ To act on such an imperative involves the intelligible choice of the incentive of duty as ground of action (Incorporation Thesis). In thus grounding action, a categorical imperative provides a ground for all empirical normativity: any strings of mutually justifying hypothetical imperatives 'Do X for the sake of Y', 'Do Y for the sake of Z'⁴⁶ are ultimately grounded in a categorical imperative 'Do Z because it is your duty' insofar as the moral law provides the only rationally valid justification for action according to Kant (GMM III – see the 'Reciprocity Thesis' in Allison, 1996:207-210). These are

⁴³ The moral perspective is that of rational agents. For Korsgaard, this does not amount to a view from nowhere as Nagel would have it, because, as she puts it, 'there is nothing that the world is like from nowhere' (Korsgaard, 1996:245n). Insofar as I claim that a proper ground is found in acting from the moral incentive, I am claiming more than a perspectival result: that is, the way in which the dutiful agent's actions are grounded is right, not just right for him as rational agent.

This distinction has consequences for Korsgaard's description of the benevolent agent's action – see footnote 56.

⁴⁴ A given desire defines an end E which is its satisfaction. The beliefs define empirical conditions C under which the agent takes herself to be acting. The hypothetical imperative then takes the form: 'If C obtain, do X to achieve E'.

⁴⁵ Although Kant does state there is only one categorical imperative (the moral law), all maxims/principles of duty define categorical imperatives (Onof, 1998).

⁴⁶ Reference to the conditions C reflecting the agent's beliefs about the situation is omitted here, as this only complicates the imperatives unnecessarily.

the only categorical imperatives, and therefore the only proper grounds for empirical normativity for Kant.

Once this mapping of the SL-DM dual motivation account onto the empirical/intelligible account of action has been carried out, we can see how the empirical normative reasons involve subordinate inclinations: the end of the dutiful action is the object of a desire that is operative when the agent has certain beliefs. This is a *subordinate* inclination, precisely insofar as, at the intelligible level, the incentive for acting to achieve this end is duty. That is, this translation of Stratton-Lake's account shows how it can easily accommodate action empirically driven by desires as morally worthy, as long as these desires are subordinate inclinations implementing the commands of duty. Such desires are thus controlled by duty which ensures that they do not lead one astray in certain circumstances (Baron, 1995:137).

To return to Williams's worry, these desires are interests in the realisation of certain ends. They remain at the core of the dutiful benevolent agent's action, even if, insofar as the action is dutiful, they are operative only insofar as they implement the requirements of duty. To say that the focus of such action is the nature of the action, is to indicate that the end of the action is viewed as the end of an implementation of duty, whereby duty is chosen as the incentive.⁴⁷ This conclusion is therefore the same as Herman's, namely that when consulting duty, the agent's interest only changes insofar as it is now an interest in the success of an action viewed as implementing duty (Herman, 1993:28). But, additionally, we now have an understanding of the role these ends play in defining the empirical normative reasons for the action, a normativity grounded in the choice of duty as an incentive.

⁴⁷ Insofar as these inclinations are subordinated to duty, they contribute to the ends of duty, i.e. the ends of dutiful action. That is, they can contribute for instance to those obligatory ends identified by Kant in the *Metaphysics of Morals*: my perfection and the happiness of others (MM:385-388).

If we now consider the non-benevolent agent acting out of duty,⁴⁸ his action must involve such desires on an empirical account: the motive of duty can only be implemented in practice insofar as such empirical inclinations are operative. If no benevolent inclinations are operative when the agent in need of help is encountered, the motive of duty has to mobilise some (pre-existing, or new – see above). This however, will amount to defining an *interest* in the satisfaction of certain ends.⁴⁹ That is, the agent will have a concern for the success of his endeavour to provide help, which addresses an important aspect of Williams's criticism. That is, it is not the case, as Williams understands it, that duty, for Kant, stands in opposition to an interest in providing help, as the wrong kind of reason for action. It is rather that, by acting out of duty, the non-benevolent agent will have an interest in providing help awoken by, or borne out of respect for, the moral law. This interest is manifested in the subordinate inclinations summoned by duty. Moreover, this action out of duty will give rise to some inclination to act in this way: this is how the compassionate inclinations Kant advocates (MM:457) will grow.⁵⁰

Even assuming a proponent of Williams's views were prepared to go along with Kant's dual empirical/intelligible account of agency—an unlikely assumption—it is probable that he would still find that this motivational account gives insufficient pride of place to the agent's interest in the end of

⁴⁸ I am grateful to an anonymous referee whose comment led to my clarifying my thoughts on this issue.

⁴⁹ Such ends are however not necessarily “benevolent” ones: one can be interested in the success of one's action of helping without experiencing any particular compassion for the needy agent.

⁵⁰ These are indeed benevolent inclinations since they amount to being inclined to help when a needy agent is encountered (compare with footnote 40). It remains however an empirical issue as to how strong such benevolent inclinations are. In particular, how strong are they in comparison with other inclinations (e.g. misanthropy, laziness, ...) which would oppose them in most circumstances.

the action.⁵¹ To this, the Kantian can however reply, and go on the offensive, as it were.

Indeed, recall that, as explained above, the inclinations we are dealing with here are relevant to the empirical description of the action. If they are not subordinated to duty, then this means that the agent is acting out of Inclination, as an incentive in the intelligible account of agency. This Inclination is incorporated into the agent's principle/ maxim of action. Standardly, it is assumed that this is indeed the same as the inclination in its empirical form, and this is certainly a possible interpretation.⁵² However, Kant does tell us clearly that all action which is not out of duty has to be viewed as governed by an alternative principle (AA06: 23-25), e.g. the principle of self-love. I take this to mean that the Inclination in question, however one wants to describe it, is ultimately always directed at oneself. And there are good grounds for making this identification.⁵³

For the benevolent man who does not consult duty, is ultimately acting on the grounds that the neediness of the other is *unbearable to him*, or on the grounds that *this satisfies him/makes him happy*.^{54 55}

⁵¹ On the other hand, Stratton-Lake's proposal would be more congenial to the Williams objection insofar as it gives pride of place to the normative reasons which define the primary motive. As I argued above, Stratton-Lake's proposal is clearly distinct from Kant's motivational account; it is, on the contrary, rather congenial to Ross's denial that there can be any obligation to act out of any certain motive.

⁵² This interpretation is certainly compatible with all that I have proposed so far.

⁵³ Among those grounds, one could mention the fact that this avoids the problem of how an inclination defined in empirical terms in terms of its end could feature in an intelligible account of action.

⁵⁴ This does not imply that Kant would deny the possibility of altruism. Kant distinguishes between the incentive prompting an action and its end. The end of the altruist's action is the other's welfare. But the incentive driving him has its roots in self-love if his agency ignores the commands of duty. Korsgaard (1996:243) addresses a similar issue in response to Nagel's criticism (1996:206). Namely, she claims that the benevolent agent does not want 'to help others only because it *pleases* him to do so', but rather that 'he *chooses* to help others because he *wants* to'. This is right, but she does not spell out what the principle of choice is here. And clearly it is that one ought to do what one wants to do, i.e. it is a principle of self-love.

The answer to the criticism that the motivation of duty is not appropriate in certain situations can now be formulated very robustly: on a Kantian dichotomy of Inclination and duty as motives, it is *only* in the case of action out of duty that the other's neediness features properly in my motivation.

The obligation to develop moral inclinations

The examination of the case of a lack of morally favourable inclinations, or the presence of unfavourable inclinations has emphasised the need for the motive of duty to mobilise inclinations that will carry out its commands. On the account in terms of normative reasons, it is now apparent that this means that duty will have to foster a real interest in ends providing the agent with empirical normative reasons for his action.

The interpretation proposed here therefore shows that any act out of duty involves, in its empirical description, inclinations (pre-existing or not) endorsed by duty and contributing to the ends of dutiful action. We thus have a duty to develop inclinations that are morally favourable, and to pursue corresponding ends. This is not a duty over and above our mere duty to act morally, but is an integral part of it, which follows analytically from the requirements of duty, together with the conditions for its empirical implementation.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ This is one aspect of Kant's point about the unreliability of inclinations (GMM:398): were the agent not to find this sight sufficiently unbearable, or not to be in state to experience the satisfaction/happiness from providing help, he may not be motivated to act to do so.

⁵⁶ This claim can be given further substantiation. An action which makes use of subordinate inclinations is thereby *more efficient*. Here efficiency is understood as the ability to achieve the ends required by duty: insofar as pursuing one dutiful end implies others are not being pursued, efficiency in the pursuit of the ends of duty is a relevant dutiful concern. That is, there is an *indirect duty* to seek greater efficiency in carrying out our duty.

On the present interpretation, the dutiful benevolent agent's motive of duty can rely upon the action having been set out by the original prompting

As discussed above, Kant introduces a duty to develop ‘compassionate (...) feelings in us’ as an ‘indirect duty’ (MM:457).⁵⁷ Of these feelings, he says that one can ‘make use of them as so many means to sympathy based on moral principles’ (MM:457; see also AA08:337-8), which strongly suggests the subordinate role of such inclinations and their corresponding ends which is proposed in this paper. In this subordinate role, these inclinations *support* duty, so that Kant can describe them as doing ‘what the representation of duty alone would not accomplish’ (MM:457).

In this final section of the paper, I would like to examine how this indirect duty to develop compassionate feelings strongly suggests the appropriateness of the interpretation of the role of inclinations proposed in this paper, and the inadequacy of the standard picture. The standard interpretation has it that this duty follows from the fact that we ought to facilitate our fulfilling our duty in the face of contrary

inclination: this inclination will already have specified in a fair amount of detail exactly what is required, because an inclination is directed to a particular end. With inclination doing this work, duty does not therefore have the task of “constructing” an action from scratch. Such a task will be all the more challenging to fulfil, the less subordinate inclinations can be called upon to specify the detail of the action.

There is another aspect of this efficiency provided by inclinations. As we noted above, to do one’s duty, one must first be able to recognise what it is. As Herman (1993:77-93) explains, this requires us to be receptive to moral salience. Such receptivity is in fact best achieved through the availability of *subordinate inclinations*. This can be seen by noting that, in our example, grasping the neediness of the other agent is not merely grasping a state of affairs. It is also the grasp of some ‘ought’, which is not yet the ‘ought’ of duty. It is a grasp of how things ‘ought’ to be if the other’s end were to be realised. In principle, an agent could have such a grasp without any emotional attachment to an improvement in the other’s condition. That is, this would be grasped merely cognitively, as a fact. This is, typically, characteristic of the non-benevolent dutiful agent. But this is not efficient, as the extreme case of Asperger’s syndrome suggests: the afflicted agent experiences no such attachments, and as a result, has to learn to recognise non-affectively what others would find appropriate or desirable in a large number of standard situations.

⁵⁷ Unlike Timmermann (2007:36), I take an indirect duty to follow from direct duties as an analytical consequence of the truth of the synthetic a priori truths which these direct duties amount to.

inclinations (e.g. Baron, 1995:218; Allison, 1996:122).⁵⁸ This would make it into a sort of meta-duty. But how, on the standard interpretation which sees no role for inclinations in relation to moral worth, can there be a duty to develop inclinations of any sort? If any favourable inclinations such as the ones Kant enjoins us to develop, were available, they *could* not, on this standard account, make any difference to an action's moral worth.

An obvious response here would seem to be that, with such inclinations, the agent is more likely to act out of duty. This suggests that what is at stake is making it possible for there to be more morally worthy actions. There are, however, no grounds in Kant's ethics for thinking that the quantity of morally worthy actions is a measure of moral worth, and/or should constitute an end of duty. The category of quantity is not appropriate here.

Recalling that Kant assigns no moral worth to the agent who is endowed with sympathetic inclinations (GMM:398), it is clear that what is valuable cannot be the possession of such inclinations.⁵⁹ And indeed, the duty is to 'cultivate the compassionate natural (...) feelings in us' (MM:457). Acquiring these inclinations is therefore what is of value. Now we must ask what is it about this acquisition that is morally worthy? A plausible answer is that willing this acquisition is morally worthy. Indeed, this would amount to the claim that duty commands us to will (for the future) further dutiful action. And the only way this would seem to be possible, insofar as my future choice is not something I

⁵⁸ Baron (1995:218) interprets the role of inclinations as that of providing a boost to our motivation to act dutifully. This implies an understanding of motivation which is incompatible with the Incorporation Thesis. Interestingly, however, Baron's solution to avoid an impure will is to interpret the role of inclinations as making us sensitive to the needs of others to help us carry out our broad duty of charity. This is certainly part of the story, as Allison (1996:122) also points out. But it cannot account for Kant's emphasis upon overcoming the pernicious influence of inclinations that oppose our acting dutifully (MM:457).

⁵⁹ I am assuming here that the unreliability of these inclinations is not the only ground for their unsuitability as incentives.

can decide upon now, would be to facilitate such future dutiful action. If this seems right, is it the whole story?

Consider a possible world in which the understanding of neurological processes is such that it is possible to inhibit certain types of feelings and enhance certain dispositions.⁶⁰ In this world, would we have a duty to undergo treatment which could alter our inclinations neurologically? This would, after all, be the most efficient way of fulfilling the duty to acquire the right kind of inclinations.

I think that this 'Brave New World' duty would not be endorsed by Kant. The reason is that 'cultivating' is a key part of the duty. It is therefore not just the acquisition, but also the cultivation of these inclinations that is morally worthy. In a 'Brave New World', if the single decision of undergoing the inclination altering treatment were our duty, it is hard to see how Kant could, at the same time, pour so much praise upon the non-benevolent unsympathetic dutiful agent (GMM: 398). What impresses Kant is the moral fitness of this agent's motive, which is exercised when it has to overcome conflicting inclinations. Thus he refers to the unsympathetic agent as giving 'himself a far higher worth' (GMM: 398) than his sympathetic counterpart. This can only be because the overcoming of adverse inclinations is morally worthy. But since it is not the action itself which is thereby more morally worthy, as we saw above, it has to be the agent. It is noteworthy that Kant also talks of cultivating 'one's natural predispositions' (MM:387) as an aspect of the duty to perfect oneself. Although he does not mention sympathetic inclinations here, once their development has been identified as a duty (MM:457), it seems natural to include them among the predispositions that are to be cultivated as part of the duty to perfection.

If such cultivation of inclinations is therefore crucially part of the duty to develop sympathetic inclinations, the standard interpretation which excludes inclinations from any

⁶⁰ Considering what is currently possible with drugs and stimulation through electrodes, such a world is not obviously very alien to us.

role in moral worth does not seem adequate to explain this duty. On the account proposed in this paper, this duty is fulfilled through the agent's moral worth insofar as the inclinations acquired and strengthened by the agent, are just manifestations of this worth in the realm of appearances. Therefore, this duty just is that of the moral progress discussed above, which reflects the agent's moral worth in the world of appearances over time, a duty which can be seen as an aspect of the duty to perfection (MM: 385-7).

Moreover, the importance of developing these inclinations oneself shows how the agent's ownership of such inclinations plays a key role. That is, the 'Brave New World' inclinations obtained by treatment are problematic precisely to the extent that the agent does not have authorship of them. And since they have not either been acquired through the developmental process of education, the agent will not really own them. I think this sheds additional light upon the need for the practical notion of self introduced at the outset in this paper.

Further, the agent's development of his inclinations enables us to identify a notion of one's identity which is narrower than this practical conception of self we started with. Those inclinations which I have consciously fostered and developed stand for an identity which I aspire to, while it is no doubt the case that there are other inclinations I also act upon which do not fit in with my conception of that identity. This means that the moral progress in question is defined by a conception of the agent's practical identity which is an object of aspiration. This *teleological conception of the agent's practical identity* addresses any concerns one may have had that the practical notion of self was very broad in its inclusion of all active inclinations.⁶¹ Korsgaard (1996:

⁶¹ See footnote 7. Note a parallel with Korsgaard (1996:238) who develops her grounding of normativity around a conception of one's identity. This does lead to some ambiguity however, as to how the 'better person' which this identity encapsulates can both be 'an object of aspiration and identification'. This seems to result from the problems encountered when ignoring the dual empirical/intelligible accounts of agency. This duality enables one to see one's *Gesinnung* as defining one's moral progress in the empirical world.

238-9) shows that grounds for a narrower notion of identity defined by those inclinations which are ‘more deeply our own’ can be found in Kant (e.g. in his ‘Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History’) and expresses surprise at the fact that ‘Kant didn’t take up this question’ of the agent’s identification with such inclinations. I think that with the duty to develop sympathetic inclinations, Kant partly addresses this issue on the present interpretation.

In any case, without such a notion, i.e. if the self were characterised exclusively by the power of rational choice, the possibility of morally worthy action, as viewed from the perspective of an empirical account, would be dependent upon the availability of inclinations or the ability to develop some, both of which would be contingent features of the agent’s self.⁶² This would leave practical rationality in a situation akin to that of theoretical reason whose cognitive power is limited by the need for a sensible manifold to be intuited for a given concept: just as an intuition of a manifold is required for a concept to refer to an object, thereby defining limits to human knowledge, inclinations would be the “other” of rationality, that which limits its pretensions. However, practical rationality, for Kant, knows no such bounds: as a result, a practical conception of the self has to take into account the existence of inclinations which characterise it, and which its power of rational choice is able to control. That is why Kant describes the Doctrine of Virtue as addressed to human beings, i.e. not holy beings, but beings who are conscious of their ‘*capacity* to master one’s inclinations when they rebel against the law’ (MM:383). The practical determination of the self which this amounts to, is a notion for which other grounds can be adduced in Kant’s critical philosophy (Onof, 2010). This conception of self in turn vindicates a notion of moral worth of the agent

⁶² It would still be possible to will to act dutifully, but the possibility of implementation of any action defined by this willing would be dependent upon contingent circumstances lying beyond the self understood as the power of free rational choice.

that is reflected in the inclinations she endorses and develops, as this paper has proposed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in this paper, I have proposed the introduction of a practical conception of self which is characterised both by inclinations and by the freedom to alter them (part A). I have shown that inclinations that are subordinated to duty contribute to morally worthy action (part B). These subordinate inclinations provide a mark, in the realm of appearances, of the agent's moral worth (part C). They are directed to empirical ends which duty endorses as worthy of pursuit (part D). The development of subordinate inclinations, which involves the adoption of such ends, is a manifestation of an agent's moral progress, and as such it constitutes an indirect duty.

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